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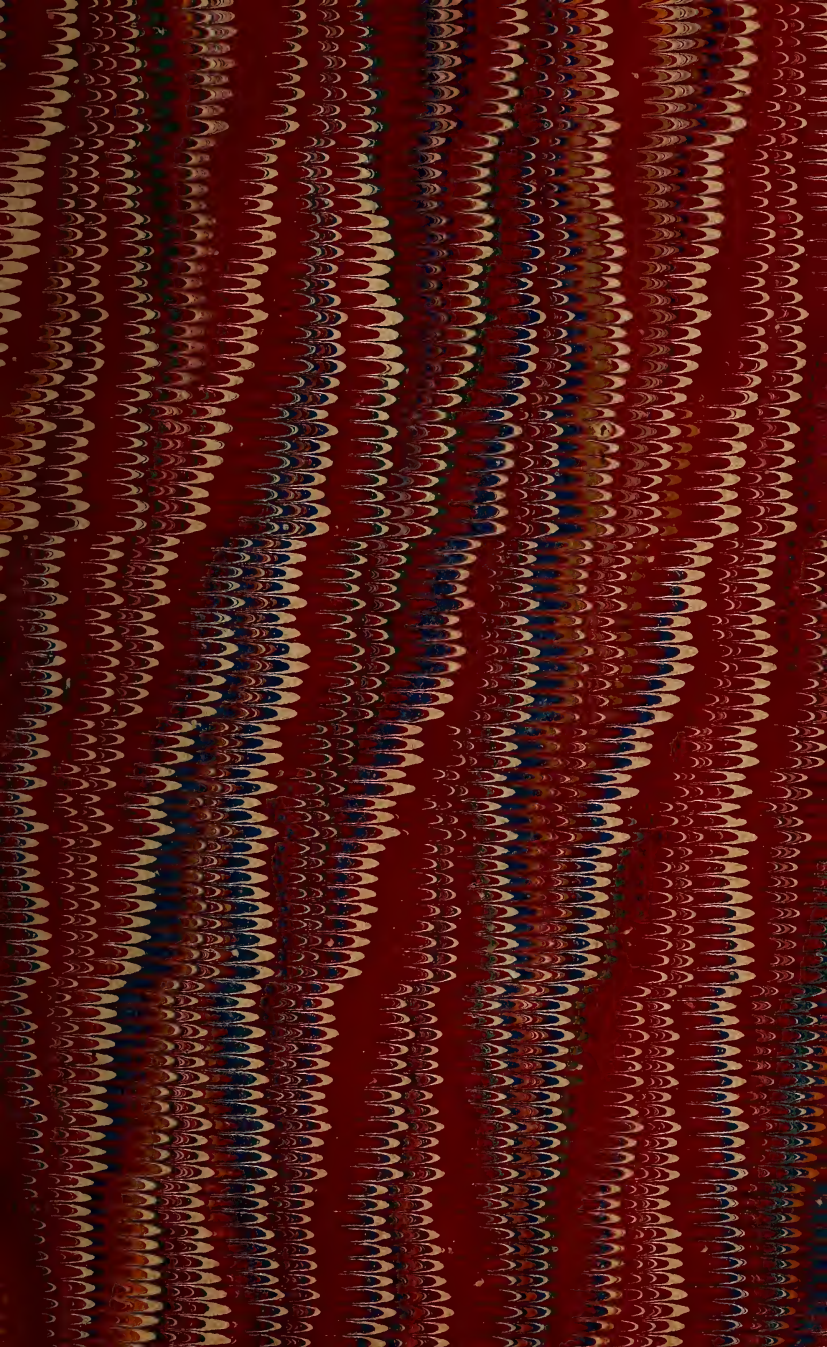
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Farewell:

A S E R M O N

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, APRIL 21st, 1872.

BY

C. D. BRADLEE,

PASTOR OF THE "CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER," BOSTON.

A SLIGHT SKETCH

OF THE

"CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER,"

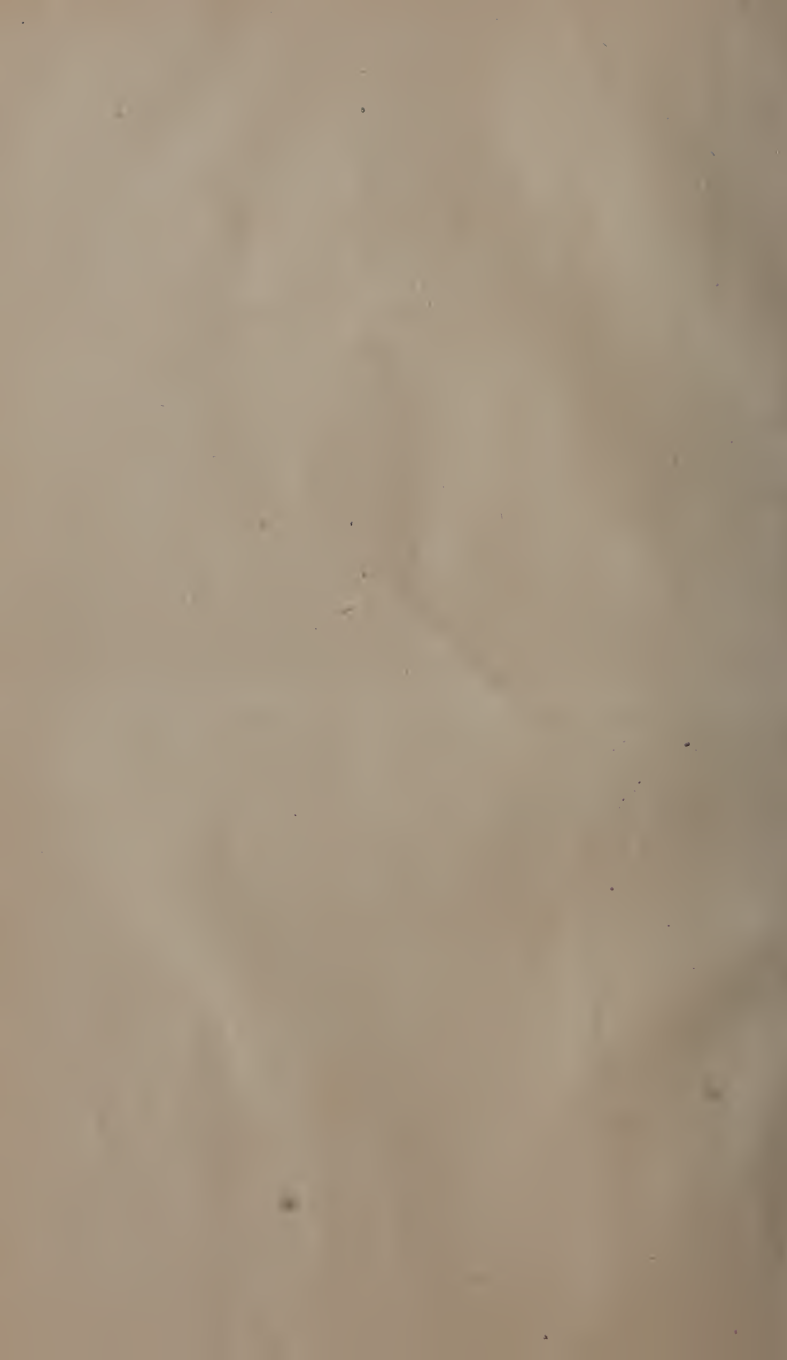
AND OF ITS HAPPY AND HOLY WORK, FOR EIGHT BLESSED YEARS.

Printed, not Published.

B O S T O N :

PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SON.

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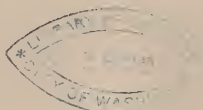
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FAREWELL.

“FINALLY, BRETHREN, FAREWELL.” — 2 COR. xiii. 11.

THE time seems to have arrived when we each ought to say to the other, and all of us to our beloved Church, that sad, mysterious, yet holy word, Farewell. I am glad that we can say it with no harsh feelings, with no bitter remembrances, and with no blur nor stain upon the eight years' pilgrimage we have taken, that should make us blush or tremble. We can say it holding each other by the hand, with our hearts in blessed harmony, with no financial obligation to press us down, and with our record clear, bright, beautiful, full of inspiration, and full of joy. No church, I think, in Boston, or in Massachusetts, or anywhere, has been more united, more peaceful, more happy, and more like one family, than ours.

We came together as strangers; but we have lived together as brothers and sisters in the Lord, and never will there be any relations between us but those of the most cordial love and the most holy fellowship.

I know that I leave this place with your blessing, and I am sure that you each and all are joined to me by ties that can never really be broken. Why, then, do we part? Why must we arise, and go hence?

This is best answered by a slight sketch of the growth of the Church, and by a brief survey of the changes that have taken place in this vicinity, since we were organized as a Society. In 1864, when we commenced our services, the only two independent churches of our faith, south of Dover Street, were the South Congregational Church and the Church of the Unity, both of which were quite well filled; yet by a special census at that time there were over one hundred and fifty families south of Dover Street that attended no place of religious worship.

These families, too, I believe, were to a great extent able to support preaching, and needed only a little encouragement by which they would soon be led to become regular worshippers in the temple of our Lord. Many did not ask for a Mission Church, but a Home Church, where each and all could contribute towards the support of the gospel, and where each and all could stand together in a close and beautiful union. We endeavored in our humble way to meet and greet this want, and, as our records will prove, with a success that led us to expect a long life and a wide field of usefulness.

But induced by the great field all whitening for the harvest, in this part of our city, and perhaps too a little encouraged by our own growth and life, two other churches located immediately in our vicinity,—the “Church of the Disciples” and the “New South Free Church,” with pastors whose good names are in all the Churches, and for whom I entertain the deepest respect and the most reverent love. Beside these two neighboring churches all beautifully built, our humble little

ark, all unpretending, was brought into terrible contrast ; and the new-comers drifted where the eye was better pleased, and where the shelter was more inviting.

From our own flock but three families strayed away for these more attractive homes, but from that time our hopes for added strength were really blasted, unless we too could build a splendid house unto the Lord, or relocate where other churches were at a more convenient distance. Death came, families moved into the country, some went away to the extreme end of the city, until the regular parish became greatly impaired, although the "strangers within our gates" have helped to encourage our hearts even unto this day ; whilst, too, those who did remain — and on this list you will find some of the prominent citizens of the South End — were ready to stay even here, in this undesirable spot, for an indefinite future. But it was best, hemmed in as we were by other churches, in our unattractive place and our unfavorable locality, — it was very much for the best that we should stop.

Some of you tell me, my faithful friends, that you will form again, before another winter, where none can molest us, or make us afraid ; or that, with your already earnest and noble members, you will unite with some other church, and take a stand that nothing can shake. I am not sure that this would be well. Let us wait God's wise and beautiful direction. Let us pause till we hear the voice that shall say to us, "Go forward !" Let us rejoice that we have done so much, that we even yet remain so strong, and that we have accomplished all these things through every discouragement, and in the

face of every thing that seemed to strive to put us back. Let us be glad that for eight years we have done our work, made our influence felt, and falsified the predictions of a few croaking spirits, who, not loving us overmuch, looked for our speedy dissolution within six months, or a year, from our start. Bring to-day into our Church only those who have left us because they moved so far away that they could not come any more, and a multitude of our well-known business men would appear in our sight. The leading founder of our Society,* a man widely known for his great benevolence, his high moral integrity, and his large financial power, left us only when he changed his home, and has given us his best wishes ever since.

Another friend,† deeply interested in our welfare, and never leaving us until he moved from the city, devoted himself with a beautiful self-sacrifice to the growth of our society, and has always felt a deep regard for our best well-being. How many might be cited of those high in the confidence of the people who have stood by our little ark bravely, and who, although not of our number now, will never cease to carry us under the shelter of their good-will and along the rich valleys of their bountiful love.

I will not call any names, but how many might I name,‡ who once with us, but forced to leave us against

* P. L. Everett, Esq.

† B. W. Gilbert, Esq.

‡ J. W. Allen, Esq.; Samuel Bailey, Esq., deceased; Omar Binney, Esq.; J. R. Campbell, Esq.; Seth W. Fowle, Esq., deceased; S. F. Gates, Esq.; Fred Kidder, Esq.; J. T. Kennard, Esq.; C. H. W. Prentiss, Esq.; J. K. Porter, Esq.; C. A. Richards, Esq.; and many others. The list is long, and sweet and sacred.

their will, or for some reason that seemed to them good, perhaps present here to-day to listen to our closing words, would rise and give us their benediction. Can we not then claim a great success? Eight years' good work is no loss. Debts all settled are an honest record, and a parish still left who now sorrowfully seek other homes, is that in which we take great pride in speaking.

God bless you all who have stood by me so faithfully to the last, not led away by outside splendors, nor coaxed by the inexorable demands of fashion, not ashamed of our precious sanctuary, and so glad and so happy to assemble here week after week.

I have no word of reproach for such as have been afraid, and have run away. I am glad to say that with the few seceders, who left because they sought the more splendid material adornments, I have held a most cordial fellowship, whenever it has been my privilege to meet them; but I do say to you all who have loved to gather here, asking for no massive organ and no gorgeous cathedral, I thank you, I bless you, with the deepest and the most earnest gratitude, — nay, I cannot help thinking that for that very same modesty, humility, patience, and consecration, there will be found added rewards in the Kingdom of our Father, and of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I do not think it right that any minister should gauge his success by the numbers that gather round his ministrations, nor by the services he is asked to perform, nor by any thing whatsoever of outside approbation. Our record is with God, and in the hearts of the people. Only as we actually build up the Kingdom of

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, can we count our real success, and that test will only come when we arrive within the heavenly gates. Yet, if we should boast after the manner of men, our external proofs of influence are not small. During the eight years of my ministry, there probably has been connected at different times with our church, either as permanent hearers, or as occasional listeners, or as those who looked for no other ministrations than ours, representatives of not far from two hundred families. In which period I have joined in marriage* sixty-three couples, or one hundred and twenty-six people, have given the rite of baptism to one hundred and two persons, have attended one hundred and ten funerals, have added to my list of communicants seventy-seven names, and have presented a certificate of membership in the Sunday School to about two hundred and seventy-five, old and young.

For over five years a Prayer Meeting has been held in this Church once a week, without any pause; and two Bible Classes have for many years met either at my house or in the Church. I have occupied this pulpit nearly all the time, making but very few exchanges, and very seldom seen in other pulpits, because I have felt that my work was here, and I have thought that my best strength should be consecrated in your behalf.

But enough of statistics and personal allusion; for

* Since my ordination, Dec. 11, 1854, I have officiated at one hundred and two weddings, two hundred and twenty-eight baptisms, and one hundred and seventy-eight funerals.

all such things are offensive to me save as I record them for others, and if I have tried to be faithful, or have accomplished any thing, it is enough that God knows it. Yes, enough: the past is past. The future is all before us. I go I know not where, but God knows, and that is sufficient; and you will pray for me, I am sure, that I may never give up the office of a steward of the Lord, that I may always preach the gospel of Jesus, that I may find a flock who shall deal with me as gently as you have always dealt, and that I may at last obtain some humble place of rest in the City of our God. But now I must say Farewell, a word so hard to utter, yet something that must be spoken by each and by all, throughout some part of a personal experience, — nay, a word that has been spoken for thousands of years, and must be repeated many thousands of years more. To your familiar faces, to your constant, cordial speech, to your kind hearts and to your myriad courtesies, Farewell. To all the intimacies of the household that have been so very precious, where heart has responded to heart, where hand has clasped hand, where in your joyous seasons I have always been welcome, and where in grievous hours I have tried to be the comforter; to your generous tables and your liberal bounties and every thing about you that has been so genial, inspiring, and beautiful, — Farewell. To the band of children that each Sabbath afternoon have met in this Church with their simple and earnest faith, to their thrilling hymns, their earnest prayers, their pleasant voices, their cheerful manner, and their gentlemanly and ladylike and Christian behavior, Farewell. To the Superintendent of the School,

his Assistants, and all the Teachers, and the Bible Classes, who have been so faithful and so honest, and such a holy comfort, Farewell. To the organ and to the one who has made it preach in tones so suggestive and touching; to the Choir, and to all in any office in those seats of praise; to him so careful each Sunday that all the strangers should be welcome, and so constantly looking after my comfort and peace; to everybody and every thing, let there be no omission, — Farewell. But why should I utter this sad word? If my life be spared, I hope not to be very far away. Who knows but that some of you yet may be where I am, and again call me, in some other place, pastor and friend? Neither shall I go so far away but that I shall hear from you continually; and of course I shall at once establish a spiritual telegraph between your hearts and my heart, and I know that the messages that will pass to and fro continually will ever be loving, gentle, true, and holy, whilst the alphabet in which they shall be written shall be known only to you and to me.

Yet why should I not say *fare-well*? Certainly I wish that no one should fare ill; least of all would I wish harm to you my patient hearers, my generous friends, my noble parishioners, and my eight years' weekly companions. May good fortune always be your lot! Propitious may the heavens ever prove in your behalf, and fruitful the earth! May your homes be full of joy, your business full of success, your bodies full of health, and your minds full of good thought; but above all, more than all, comprehending all, may your hearts be full of grace. Or if, to fare well, you must pass through seeming ills, greet rough tides, and

be panoplied by many disasters, may you be so brave, so patient, so pure, and so thoroughly resigned and trustful, that all your clouds shall have a silver lining; then will all your cares and pains be really but blessings in disguise.

At last, dear parishioners, in heaven may you fare well, when the countenance shall change, and the body become marble, and time be closed: then may it be all bright and beautiful. May God give you at last a ready welcome, a glorious pardon, and His consoling and uplifting, "Well done." May the Master be able to say, These are my disciples. May your mansion be all ready, your robe prepared, your crown glittering, your harp tuned, your celestial work at hand, and right before you a joyous welcome from the saints who now await your coming.

Farewell! Oh, what a word that is which all are speaking! The traveller says it as he leaves his home that he may visit distant lands. The maiden says it as she enters into marriage. The young man says it as he goes to a strange place to make what he calls a living. We all say it, as we part from each other, at any time, or for whatever cause.

It is said, too, — ah! each of us has said it, — when we bend over the cold frames of our dearest, wiping the moist brow and closing the glazed eyes, or it will be said as we ourselves sink to sleep for the last time on the mortal side. Yes: we have all said those words, "Good-by," which is "God be with you," "Adieu," which is, "I commit you to God," and "Farewell," which is, "May all good fortune be yours." We have

all thus spoken, else life would not be completed, nor the soul truly ripened. But will you not, as I go away, — ah ! I know full well you will, — bid me farewell ? Oh, give me your best prayers, and still keep me in a choice corner of your hearts ! The Apostle Paul's constant exclamation, you know, was imbedded in those words, or others like them, " Brethren, pray for us." So would I get strength at your hands, by your prevailing intercession.

But I have said enough. Words are weak at such times as these. The heart is too full for a perfect expression. God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, bless you one and all ever and for ever, and may the blessed Holy Spirit abide with you in all coming days. As I part from you now, I would use the good words of Bonar as a prayer for myself ; and may you each make the utterance a petition for your own hearts !

" Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
 However dark it be !
 Lead me by Thine own hand,
 Choose out the path for me.

" Smooth let it be or rough,
 It would be still the best :
 Winding or straight it matters not,
 It leads me to Thy rest.

" I dare not choose my lot ;
 I would not, if I might ;
 Choose Thou for me, my God,
 So shall I walk aright.

" Not mine, not mine, the choice,
 In things or great or small ;
 Be Thou my guide, my strength,
 My wisdom, and my all."


APPENDIX.

The following Hymn, written by CHARLES WILLIAM BUTLER (and read by Miss ELLA COLLAMORE), was prepared for the Eighth Sunday School Floral Anniversary, in the afternoon of April 21.

To C. D. Bradlee. By C. W. Butler.

O PASTOR, shepherd of this flock,
Peace rest with thee, where'er thou art !
Rest thou, with us, upon that Rock
Whereon reclines the human heart.
That rock is Love Divine, the true,
Sprinkled with Heaven's Baptismal Dew !

We a small moment now may part ;
Yet call not this a *farewell hour* :
The true in soul, the true in heart,
Are kept by friendship's holy power.
O Pastor, shepherd of this flock,
We rest on *that* Eternal Rock !





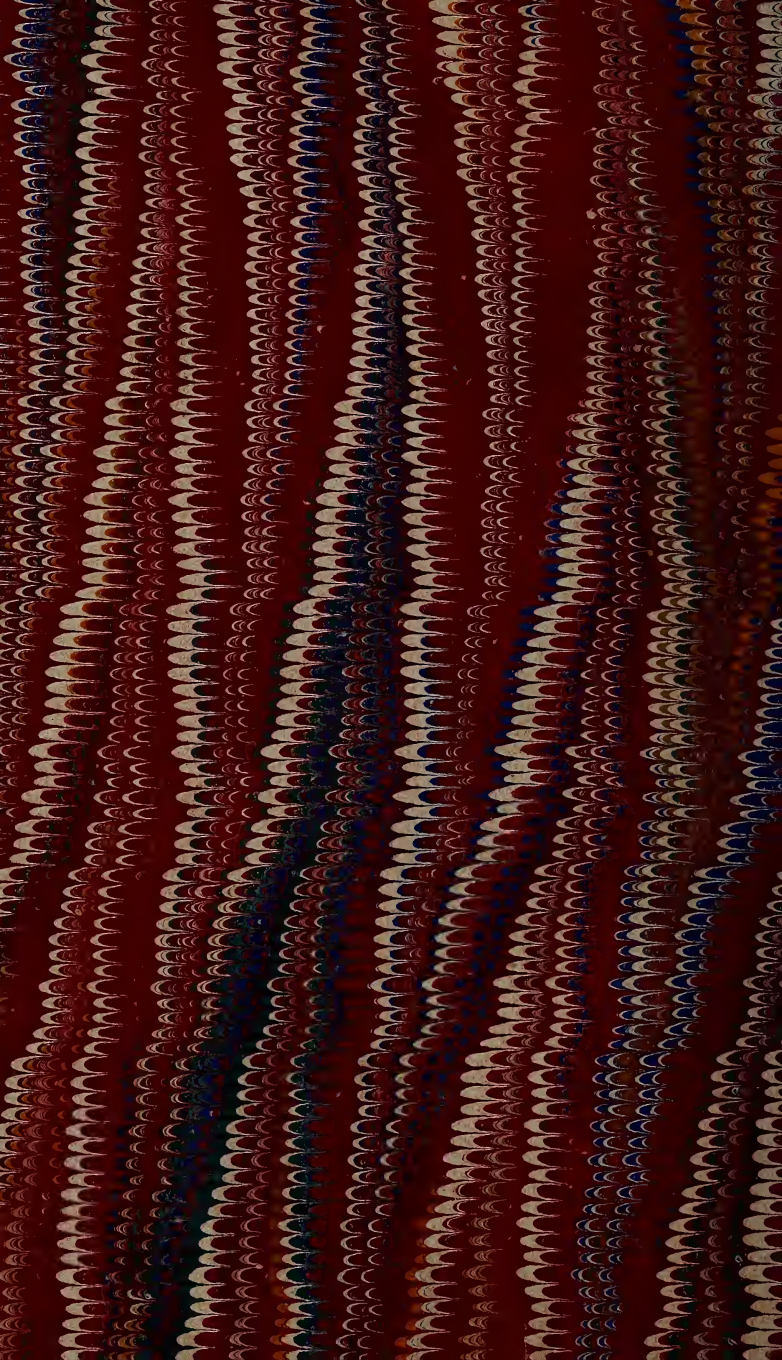














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